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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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10/721,630

11/25/2003

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EXAMINER

GISHNOCK, NIKOLAI A

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3714

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**Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.**

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

<b>Office Action Summary</b>	Application No. 10/721,630	Applicant(s) DINGER ET AL.	
	Examiner Nikolai A. Gishnock	Art Unit 3714	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

### Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

### Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 25 November 2003.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**.                      2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

### Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

### Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 25 November 2003 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

### Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All    b) ☐ Some \*    c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

### Attachment(s)

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)   | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)  | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application                       |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>11-25-03</u> | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____  |

## DETAILED ACTION

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101***

1. 35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

2. Claims 1-6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §101 as being directed to nonstatutory subject matter. The claims fail to produce a tangible effect. The requirement to be tangible is for the claim to produce a real-world result or beneficial product. The claims fail because they merely evaluate abstract functions and do not bring about a substantial application. The limitations of "providing a hierarchical tree", "providing a learning competency", "performing an information rollup", "analyzing the hierarchical tree", "adding the.... node to a list of nodes", "consulting the list of nodes", "generating a control block", and "processing the control block", do not cause an output or other indication to a user that something has occurred. If the claim does not entail transformation of an article, then the claim shall be reviewed to determine that it produces a useful, tangible, and concrete result. In making this determination, the focus is not on whether the steps taken to achieve a particular result are useful, tangible, or concrete, but rather on whether the final result achieved by the claimed invention is useful, tangible, and concrete. If the claims are found not to have such a practical application, then the claim is determined to be nonstatutory. See MPEP 2106.

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102***

3. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

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A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

4. Claims 1-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Cappellucci et al. (US 2003/0039949 A1), hereinafter known as Cappellucci. Cappellucci discloses a computer-implemented method for performing branched rollup for shared learning competencies in a learning environment, comprising: providing a hierarchical tree corresponding to the learning environment (Para. 0053), wherein the hierarchical tree includes a parent node, a first branch having a first child node and a first grandchild node, and a second branch having a second child node and a second grandchild node (Para. 0054, Table 1; also, Figure 4, Items M6.16, parent node, and subsequent nodes); providing a learning competency in the learning environment that is shared by the first grandchild node and the second grandchild node (two other {information element's} data category items can be correlated against the same MLO {Master Learning Objective}, Para. 0056); performing an information rollup (performing a correlation query, a process to find those information objects and elements that are correlated against a particular information object or element; the system finds all information object or object correlated against all MLOs which are state standards, correlated against lesson plans, and retrieves the information objects or elements searched for, both in Para. 0072) of the first child node (an MLO can be any node on the tree, Para. 0071) upon a change in state of the learning competency (the system allows a user to modify an existing information object or element, Para. 0063; in the event it is desirable to add information resources, each of these objects can be analyzed for content and other metadata categories and correlated to the MLOs quickly and efficiently, Para. 0059); and performing an information rollup of the second child

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node after performing the information rollup of the first child node (if no child MLOs are found the process can continue where the system can search for all sibling MLOs of the initial MLOs found, and the system tests to determine if any sibling MLOs were found, Para. 0074; also, Figure 8A, Items 822 & 824, and Figure 8B, Item 800) ; and performing an information rollup of the parent node only after performing the information rollup of the first child node and the information rollup of the second child node (if no sibling MLOs are found, the process can continue to where the system can search for all parent MLOs of the initial MLOs found, the system tests to determine if any parent MLOs were found, Para. 0074) [Claim 1]. Cappellucci discloses analyzing the hierarchical tree to identify the second grandchild node as sharing the learning competency with the second grandchild node (information objects are analyzed for content and other metadata categories correlated to the MLOs, Para. 0059; data category items can be correlated against the same MLO, Para. 0056; an MLO can be any node on the tree, Para. 0071; it is inherent that MLOs can be first and second grandchild nodes); and adding the second grandchild node to a list of nodes (the system can include a separate database for identifying each type of information resource and new types of resource can be added as necessary, Para. 0077) prior to performing the information rollup of the first child node (as in Para 0074 and Figures 8A & 8B; in this case the rollup of a second grandchild node {a sibling node to a first grandchild} is performed prior to the child node {the parent of the grandchild nodes}, case being where the child is the initial MLO found) [Claim 2]. Cappellucci discloses consulting the list of nodes prior to performing the information rollup of the second child node (data structure can form part of a database that stores the meta data and is used in queries to find information objects and elements, Para. 0076; this meta data can be derived from available data when the information resource is input into the system, Para. 0077, the testing steps of Para. 0074 are consulting the correlation database of Para. 0076-0077 prior to each level of

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search) [Claim 3]. Cappellucci discloses generating a control block for each of the first child node, the second child node and the parent node prior to the first performing step (meta data populating the data base of Para. 0076-0077 is generated when the information resource is input in the system, Para. 0077), wherein the control block for the parent node indicates that the information rollup of the first child node and the information rollup of second child node must both be performed prior to performing the information rollup of the parent node (the correlation data object {of the database identifying information resources} can include an MLO ID which identifies the MLO that information object is correlated to, Para. 0076; two data category items can be correlated against the same MLO, Para. 0056) [Claim 4]. Cappellucci discloses processing the control block for the first child node prior to performing the information rollup of the first child node; processing the control block for the second child node prior to performing the information rollup of the second child node; and processing the control block for the parent node prior to performing the information rollup of the parent node (the system tests to determine if any child, sibling or parent MLOs were found, then continues to the next level, as in Para. 0074) [Claim 5]. Cappellucci discloses a computerized system and a computer program product stored on a recordable medium for performing branched rollup for shared learning competencies in a learning environment, comprising: a list compilation system for generating a list of nodes that share a learning competency within a hierarchical tree corresponding to the learning environment (parsing system for establishing a correlation between information objects or elements and one or more MLOs, Para. 0066); a block generation system for generating control blocks for predecessors of the nodes in the list of nodes, wherein each of the control blocks identifies specific successors of the predecessors for which information rollups must be performed before information rollups of the predecessors can be performed (the system provides {correlation data object} tools which facilitate input of attributes of the information

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object or element, Para. 0077); and a node rollup system for processing the control blocks and performing the information rollups of the predecessors after performing the information rollups of the specific successors (correlation query process, Para. 0072-0074) [Claims 7 & 14].

Cappellucci discloses wherein the hierarchical tree comprises a parent node, a first branch having a first child node and a first grandchild node, and a second branch having a second child node and a second grandchild node (Para. 0054, Table 1; also, Figure 4, Items M6.16, parent node, and subsequent nodes) [Claims 8 & 15]. Cappellucci discloses wherein the learning competency is shared by the first grandchild node and the second grandchild node, wherein the first child node and the parent node are the predecessors of the first grandchild node, and wherein the second child node and the parent node are the predecessors of the second grandchild node (information objects are analyzed for content and other metadata categories correlated to the MLOs, Para. 0059; data category items can be correlated against the same MLO, Para. 0056; an MLO can be any node on the tree, Para. 0071; it is inherent that MLOs can be parent nodes, child nodes, and first and second grandchild nodes, as in Figure 4) [Claims 9 & 16]. Cappellucci discloses wherein the information rollup of the parent node is performed only after the information rollup of the first child node and the information rollup of the second child node are performed (if no child MLOs are found the process can continue where the system can search for all sibling MLOs of the initial MLOs found, and the system tests to determine if any sibling MLOs were found, Para. 0074; also, Figure 8A, Items 822 & 824, and Figure 8B, Item 800; if no sibling MLOs are found, the process can continue to where the system can search for all parent MLOs of the initial MLOs found, the system tests to determine if any parent MLOs were found, Para. 0074) [Claims 10 & 17]. Cappellucci discloses wherein the learning environment is implemented in a computerized environment (Para. 0062) [Claims 6, 11, & 18]. Cappellucci discloses wherein the information rollups of the first child node, the

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second child node and the parent node are performed a maximum of one time for a change in state of the learning competency (the system allows a user to modify an existing information object or element, Para. 0063; in the event it is desirable to add information resources, each of these objects can be analyzed for content and other metadata categories and correlated to the MLOs quickly and efficiently, Para. 0059; a correlation query is a process to find those information objects and elements that are correlated against a particular information object of element, Para. 0072; also Figures 6 & 7; the correlation query is used to analyze the information objects and elements when existing information objects or elements are modified), [Claims 12 & 19]. Cappellucci discloses wherein the list of nodes is generated, the control blocks are generated and processed, and the information rollups are performed upon a change in state of the learning competency (parsing, input of object meta data into database, and correlation query performed {analysis for content and other meta data categories and correlation to the MLOs} in the event that information resources are added, Para. 0059, or an existing information object is modified, Para. 0063) [Claims 13 & 20].

### ***Conclusion***

5. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Harkey (US 2002/0087346 A1) discloses a computer network of learning competencies linking content objects into a tree data structure. Arendt et al. (US 5,961,650) is a scheme to perform event rollup when detected, which will delete redundant events from a queue when a transitive closure is detected. Ross et al. (US 6,597,809) discloses a method of performing rollup of siblings of a parent in a hierarchical tree by building a rollup matrix.



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Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Nikolai A. Gishnock whose telephone number is 571-272-1420.

The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8:30a-5p.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Robert E. Pezzuto can be reached on 571-272-6996. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

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Robert E. Pezzuto  
Supervisory Patent Examiner  
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